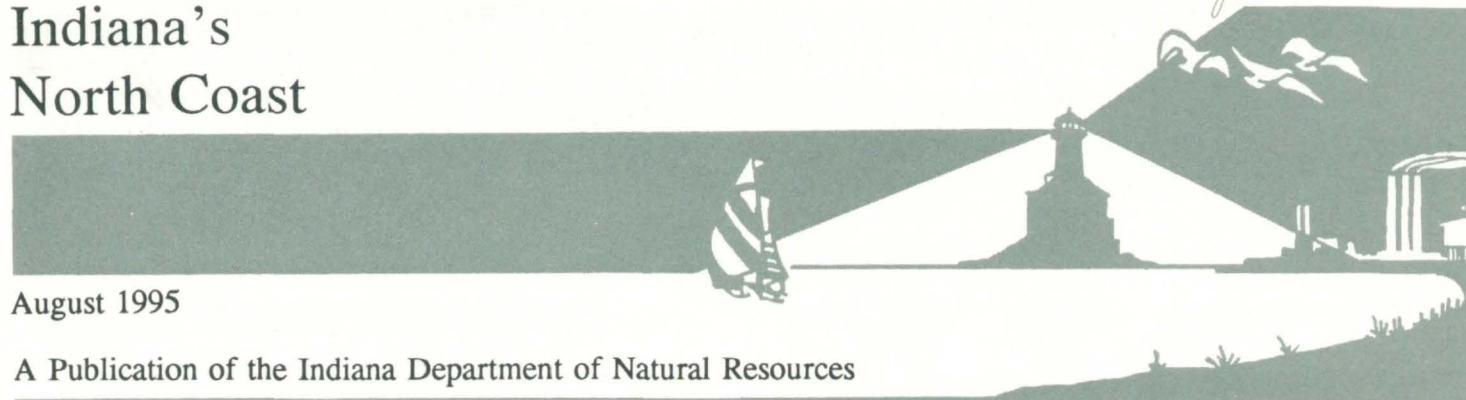


# Indiana's North Coast

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## Public Work Groups Evaluate Needs of the Shoreline

On February 13th, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) launched a public campaign to obtain public input on the issues facing the Lake Michigan shoreline and consider recommendations for the resolution of those concerns. More than 150 people attended the organizational meeting at the Paul H. Douglas Environmental Education Center that evening where Mr. Jack Costello, Deputy Director and Mr. James Hebenstreit, Assistant Director for the IDNR's Division of Water, outlined a course of action for four work groups. The primary purpose of each work group was to identify the issues relevant to their group's title and be creative in developing a "wish list" of their hopes and expectations for resolving the identified issues. The work groups were also invited to suggest how their reports should be implemented in the future. A mission statement provided guidance to the work groups; however, each group could interpret the statement to meet its own needs.

*The mission of the Northwest Indiana work groups is to identify current and future issues regarding the economic, natural and cultural resources of Indiana's Lake Michigan Coastal Region and to provide creative solutions for the resolution of these issues, to allow the most efficient use of these resources for current and future generations.*

Interested persons were invited to participate in one or more of the four work groups: Natural Resources, Water Quality and Shorelines; Ports, Industry, and Navigation; Marinas, Public Access and Recreational Uses; and Residential, Agricultural, and Commercial Development.

Each of the four groups met several times to discuss the shoreline. The groups completed their work at the end of May and since then the process

## NRC Adopts Resolution on Coastal Region

On May 22, 1995, the Natural Resources Commission unanimously adopted a resolution to support efforts to improve communications and coordination along Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline. In addition, the resolution directed IDNR staff to report back on those efforts at least once a year. The action occurred during a regular monthly meeting held near North Liberty in St. Joseph County.

Adoption of the resolution followed a discussion which highlighted the increased presence of the IDNR within the Lake Michigan coastal area. James Hebenstreit, Assistant Director of the Division of Water, noted the establishment of a field office at the mouth of Trail Creek in Michigan City. Both the Division of Law Enforcement and the Division of Fish and Wildlife conduct daily activities there. Hebenstreit also reflected upon the stationing of Steve Davis at the office. Davis is an expert in the engineering principles for littoral drift and shoreline erosion on Lake Michigan.

Hebenstreit explained that a purpose of the resolution was to formally recognize the importance of the area to the State of Indiana and to the United States, as well as to identify the opportunities and challenges afforded by the area.

Patrick Ralston, IDNR Director, also spoke to the need for the resolution. He said there had been a misunderstanding as to the IDNR's intentions toward northwest Indiana. The mistaken view by some citizens was that the agency sought to impose new statutory authority over the area. His hope was that the resolution would begin to correct these misconceptions and to point all the stakeholders in a more positive direction. The emphasis of the resolution was upon the progress which could be made with better government coordination but without the enactment of new legislation. A final result of the effort could be a Coastal Coordination Program, either with or without federal participation through CZM.



## Public Work Groups Evaluate Needs of the Shoreline

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to finalize each group's report has been underway. Collectively the work groups identified more than 200 issues and over 500 resolutions. Some issues identified in several groups include: environmental quality, streamlining of government processes, protection of private property rights, better communication among various levels of government, more consistent use of existing environmental regulations, support for economic growth and development, and enhanced public access.

The reports are quite comprehensive; therefore, the fundamentals of each group have been summarized. If you would like to read the final reports in their entirety, they should be available in northwest Indiana public libraries in September 1995.

### Industry, Ports, and Navigation

During five meetings, the Industry, Ports and Navigation Work Group identified more than 40 issues. Six of these topics were then discussed in detail in order to provide resolutions to the identified issues. The group suggested 78 resolutions to address these 6 issues. The 6 topics include:

- CZM boundary
- Industry (brownfields) issues
- Public access to industrial land
- Bureaucracy, property rights, and
- Public access - ports

### Marinas, Public Access, and Recreational Uses

Through a series of nine meetings, 77 issues were identified which were subsequently consolidated into 13 broad issue categories. The 13 categories include:

- Manage coastal, watershed, and wetland development and uses to protect water quality and protect and restore natural resources in Lake Michigan and its tributaries
- Broaden and enhance public access to recreation areas for a variety of uses
- Broaden interagency cooperation and enforcement/safety
- Shoreline erosion/nourishment/mitigation
- Marina expansion, development, and

promotion including multiple uses

- Private property rights
- Fishing access, protection, improvement and uses including river boat gaming sites
- Future uses of lake
- Citizen involvement in planning decisions
- Protection of private industry
- Economic impacts and benefits of CZM
- Protection of archaeological and cultural resources
- Licenses and user fees

Although time only allowed the Marinas, Public Access and Recreational Uses group to discuss the first 9 of the 13 issue categories, 216 resolutions were recommended for these 9 issues.

### Natural Resources, Water Quality, and Shorelines

This group also met nine times to identify issues relating to natural resources, water quality, and shorelines and then recommended solutions to the identified issues. Sixty-five issues were identified, combined, and placed in one of three categories: natural resources, water quality, or shorelines. A goal was developed by the group for each category: protect and restore natural resources as well as identify and prioritize critical natural resources; seek to improve both surface and ground water quality; and protect, improve and restore the shoreline. Below are the combined issues within their category.

#### Natural Resources:

- Natural areas/erosion
- Bio-diversity/carrying capacity
- Finance natural area preservation
- Economic benefits/impacts
- Environmental education

#### Water Quality:

- Chemical pollution (point and nonpoint) and mixing zones
- Biological pollution
- Contaminated sediments
- Lack of enforcement
- Increased pollution from runoff due to loss of natural filtering processes (wetland loss) and water as a commonwealth resource

#### Shorelines:

- Shoreline development
- Erosion and control structures
- Private property rights
- Brownfield sites
- Lake level change



The group chose to discuss the first five topics in each category. A total of 389 suggested solutions were recommended to address these 15 issues.

### Residential, Agricultural, and Commercial Development

The Residential, Agricultural, and Commercial Development work group met six times. Issues were identified under the three categories of residential, agricultural, and commercial development.

#### Residential Issues:

- Stormwater management
- Wastewater treatment
- Land use planning
- Protection of natural resources
- Government coordination and cooperation
- Public and private property rights
- Transportation needs
- Coastal zone boundaries
- Lakefront initiative

#### Agricultural Issues:

- Laws (statutes and regulations)
- Pollution and pollutants
- Critical areas
- Flora and fauna
- Property rights
- Land use

#### Commercial Issues:

- Regulations
- Pollution and pollutants
- Critical land areas
- Flora and fauna
- Property rights
- Public access to lakeshore
- Land use
- Positive incentives
- Integrated transportation plan

Five categories were selected by the group for which potential solutions were sought. These discussions resulted in 205 recommendations addressing the issues of: property rights; land use; natural resources critical areas; regulations; and pollution and pollutants.

### Work Group Concerns Are Many

The reports do not necessarily reflect a consensus of ideas. In fact, in some instances there are conflicting ideas. However, the reports do include all issues and resolutions discussed during the work group process due to the importance of the issues from the perspectives of the participants.

The diversity of issues and resolutions recorded within the four work group reports reflects the diversity of the shoreline itself and the people who live here, yet in some ways illustrates the similar expectations the people of northwest Indiana hold for this resource. A conclusion of the work group process that does seem to be a consensus is that the concerns are many.

As the work group meetings were brought to a close, the groups were asked to recommend a course of action for the future use of their reports. In general, the groups wanted their reports to maintain their separate identities but be brought together under one cover in order to be distributed to various interests and levels of government as well as made available to the general public. Another recommendation is that similar issues and resolutions among the four reports be consolidated, perhaps by another work group.

The IDNR is compiling the original four work group reports under one cover for wide distribution. At the same time, consideration is being given to the formation of a single work group to review the work group results. The four work group reports will be available in northwest Indiana public libraries in September 1995.

## **EVAN BAYH, GOVERNOR**

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## Congressman Visclosky Comments on CZM

On July 14th, 1st District Congressman Peter J. Visclosky met with members of the environmental and sustainable development committees of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and Northwest Indiana Forum at the Portage offices of those two organizations. Following his comments on the status of environmental legislation in the current Congress, Congressman Visclosky responded to questions.

A reporter for the Michigan City News-Dispatch asked: "Do you support development of coastal zone management for Indiana? And really, is that academic? Will there be funding for it in the future?"

Congressman Visclosky replied: *"I do not know about funding in the future. I have been very supportive of it and deeply regret a lot of the misinformation that has been put out about coastal zone management. I was very instrumental in making sure that a grant of \$200,000 was set aside for coastal zone management."*

*Since before taking office, I have actively talked about reexamining our lakeshore, our 45 mile sea coast if you would, in a rational fashion. Coastal zone management is a tool to use in that effort.*

*It is not another layer of government. It is not going to take any of the authority or responsibilities away from local government. It is not going to provide additional taxes upon any of the citizenry. It is not going to create a new zoning layer that people will have to go through. It is a mechanism by which people can join together and have a thoughtful, rational discussion as to what this lakeshore should look like some day.*

*I hope that we are continuing to anticipate that more and more of our lakeshore is going to open up and we should be ready to seek that opportunity and to do it in a wise and thoughtful fashion. I think it is a shame that so much misinformation has been circulated about coastal zone management."*

## Director Ralston Encourages Public Participation

Patrick Ralston, Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, visited northwest Indiana on March 30 and 31, 1995, to hear issues presented by local industry, property owners, and governmental units. He also asked for "meaningful local participation in a process to address these issues. Ralston spoke to the Northwest Indiana Forum, four of six coastal city mayors, members of the Chesterton Town Council, the three coastal county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, two of the LaPorte County Commissioners, NIPSCO, and AMOCO. A primary discussion topic was the coastal program Indiana has considered during the past year and a half, including benefits which the program could offer.

Director Ralston emphasized that "a coastal program could improve coordination among local, state and federal government agencies." An important example is the need to coordinate state and federal permitting systems. He said that with a coastal program, "an individual with good computer skills" could be located in northwest Indiana to help with what can be multiple permitting requirements. The individual might assist in determining what permits are needed as well as in keeping track of the permits during the review process. Ralston saw the need as particularly acute in northwest Indiana, "where diverse uses are located close to one another and where there are peculiar permitting requirements associated with navigable waters and Lake Michigan." Perhaps this system might also include local permits.

In each meeting Ralston attended, the need for better communication and coordination became more

apparent. In Indiana, Ralston suggested a coastal program might be more valuable by way of coordination rather than management. Ralston said he did not expect to ask the Indiana General Assembly for new statutory authority. A local official suggested that the Department of Natural Resources strive for a coastal coordination program rather than a coastal management program.

Ralston's visit follows several related initiatives in Northwest Indiana. Over the past year, Department representatives have met with local citizens and officials to learn if a coastal program would suit Indiana's needs. The Natural Resources Commission held its September monthly meeting in Hammond and participated the next day in a field trip along the Lake Michigan shoreline. In February, Deputy Director Jack Costello reflected upon the agency's interest in soliciting local input during the kick-off of work groups in Gary. Deputy Director David Herbst accompanied Ralston during the March meetings in Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties.

Ralston spoke of "opening doors" among all levels of government. "We need to increase public participation in decisionmaking and get away from the top-down system of bureaucracy which alienates the people from their government." He emphasized that a program can be successful only if it suits the "special needs of northwest Indiana." He renewed the agency desire to have public participation in the development of what could be a "Coastal Coordination Program" for Indiana's valuable Lake Michigan shoreline.



**Resolution of the Natural Resources Commission in Support of Efforts  
to Improve Communications and Coordination  
in the Use and Enjoyment of Indiana's Lake Michigan Coastal Region**

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana includes a diversity of plant and animal species unmatched in the state, including the Karner blue butterfly, sea rocket, Pitcher's thistle, Kalm's St. John's wort, beach pea, dune goldenrod, and Peregrine falcon;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana displays ecosystems of special significance, portions of which are preserved within the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Indiana Dunes State Park, and portions of which are outside these preserves;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana contains the Port of Indiana, the busiest port on Lake Michigan and a critical element of Indiana commerce;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana maintains a steel industry with state-of-the-art technology that produces 25% of the Nation's steel;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana possesses a major oil refinery and other critical energy generating industries;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana is an important population center within Indiana which enjoys an ethnic and cultural diversity otherwise unequaled in the state;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana is located adjacent to Chicago, a great metropolitan center, establishing both opportunities for tourism and challenges for providing adequate infrastructure and community services;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana includes Lake Michigan, an unparalleled water resource with the state, for boating, sport fishing, and commercial fishing;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana shares Lake Michigan, its major source of drinking water, with industrial and other usages within and outside Indiana;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana concentrates these diverse and sometimes competing uses within 45 miles of shoreline;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana is challenged by environmental degradation, much of it dating from the beginning of the 20th Century, including one of 43 Areas of Concern designated in the United States and Canada by the International Joint Commission;

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana is experiencing population growth which both enhances opportunities and exacerbates challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana is governed by a multiplicity of statutory and regulatory standards, some of which are exclusive to the region, and these are administered by a multiplicity of federal, state, and local agencies;

**NOW, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION THAT:**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall expand and enhance meaningful opportunities for public participation by citizens of Northwest Indiana in decision making relative to natural, cultural, commercial, and recreational resources.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall seek to simplify and clarify permitting processes and incentive programs in Northwest Indiana.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall actively pursue improved communication and coordination within the agency and with other state, federal, and Northwest Indiana agencies and governmental units.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall develop new educational tools, including the preparation of manuals and the possibility of placing staff locally who have computer skills, to assist the citizens of Northwest Indiana in exercising their rights and opportunities relative to agency functions.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall work with citizens of Northwest Indiana to help identify and prioritize social and environmental needs, particularly as they relate to the responsibilities of the Department.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall explore and investigate innovative methods and opportunities which may help address the requirements of Northwest Indiana.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall seek methods to implement these directives without the enactment of additional statutory authority or the imposition of new regulations which usurp the legitimate prerogatives of local government and civil liberties of private citizens.**

**The Department of Natural Resources shall report, at least once a year, on its progress toward achieving these directives.**



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